

Most digital cameras also come with a zoom lens. There is an optical zoom that works the same as a regular camera, and there is a “digital zoom”. The optical zoom has a range (perhaps 3X or 6X). This is the zoom power that the optical zoom has, and it is quite reliable. The “digital zoom” tries to extend the zoom power of the lens. It mathematically tries to figure out what your picture would look like if the optical zoom could reach out that much farther and interpolate the data and then present you with an image. These images are, in a word pathetic. At present digital zooms produce very lousy pictures. I would use the optical zoom to its potential, and forget about the digital zoom feature at present. This could change, but my experience with them has been negative.

If you have ever looked at a digital camera’s user manual, then you know that there is much more to them than what I’ve written here, but for our purposes it is sufficient if you are aware of these few things.

TAKING REASONABLE PICTURES

By “reasonable” I mean, a picture that can be manipulated to produce an acceptable image for the web site. Many of the pictures that are sent to me are just not usable. The thing is, that following a very few simple rules would change everything.

3 rules that can change everything when taking pictures for the web site:

1. Exposure

The camera has an automatic light meter. This can be set to “spot” (to read only a small target) or to “average” read the whole image area.

Most of the time it’s set to average the light reflected by the area being photographed. You have to manually set it to spot. Anyway, here is the point. Since the camera reads only light and does not know what your subject is, you have the responsibility to expose the picture properly.

That means that if you pose your subject directly in front of a bright window, the camera will then read the wonderful light streaming in from the window, and make a perfect exposure of the outside! The subject, which you posed in front of that window, will be nearly black.

It is very hard, to nearly impossible for me to correct a picture taken like this. So here’s the tip: When ever possible do not pose your subject in front of a bright window, or take a picture with extreme bright back light. This will render the picture unusable.

2. Composition

In most cases you are in complete control of the situation. You are taking a picture of people who are posing for you. If you take a moment to compose the picture you will find that your pictures come out excellent. Please be aware that the single most important thing you can do is to take control of the situation when you can.